

- 1 1. A spacer for positioning a portion of a sleeve away from a portion of a sling at least partially  
2 enclosed within the sleeve.
- 1 2. The spacer of claim 1 wherein the spacer at least partially encloses the portion of the sleeve  
2 that is spaced away from the portion of the sling.
- 1 3. The spacer of claim 2 wherein the sleeve comprises a first sleeve having a first sleeve end and  
2 a second sleeve having a second sleeve end, wherein the first and second sleeve ends are spaced  
3 away from the portion of the sling.
- 1 4. The spacer of claim 1 wherein the spacer comprises a tube having a lumen extending  
2 therethrough for traversal of the portion of the sleeve.
- 1 5. The spacer of claim 4 wherein the tube has a first end and a second end and a first tube  
2 portion and a second tube portion, wherein the first and second tube portions are formed into a  
3 V-shape.
- 1 6. The spacer of claim 5 wherein the tube includes an aperture at a vertex of the first and second  
2 tube portions for passing the portion of the sleeve in and out of the tube during traversal so as to  
3 form a sleeve bridge between the first and second tube ends.
- 1 7. The spacer of claim 4 further comprising an anchoring mechanism for anchoring the spacer to  
2 the sling.
- 1 8. The spacer of claim 7 wherein the anchoring mechanism is a suture.
- 1 9. The spacer of claim 5 comprising a truss extending between the first and second tube  
2 portions.
- 1 10. The spacer of claim 1 comprising a sling engaging member for engaging the sling.
- 1 11. The spacer of claim 10 wherein the sling engaging member comprises a sling slot.
- 1 12. The spacer of claim 1 comprising a sleeve engaging member for traversal by the portion of  
2 the sleeve.
- 1 13. The spacer of claim 10 comprising a tissue spacing member for spacing the sling away from  
2 a patient's tissue.
- 1 14. The spacer of claim 13 wherein the tissue spacing member has a concave surface.
- 1 15. The spacer of claim 10 comprising an indicator for indicating a direction in which the spacer  
2 is to be removed.
- 1 16. The spacer of claim 1 wherein the spacer comprises a handle for facilitating removal of the  
2 spacer by a medical operator.

- 1 17. The spacer of claim 15 wherein the indicator forms a handle having an arrowhead shape.
- 1 18. The spacer of claim 11 wherein the sling slot comprises an anchoring mechanism.
- 1 19. The spacer of claim 18 wherein the anchoring mechanism comprises teeth.
- 1 20. The spacer of claim 19 wherein the teeth are tapered.
- 1 21. The spacer of claim 18 wherein the anchoring mechanism comprises a cantilever beam.
- 1 22. The spacer of claim 21 wherein the cantilever beam has an inverted T-shape.
- 1 23. The spacer of claim 1 comprising a receptacle for traversal by the portion of the sleeve and  
2 an insert for mating within the receptacle and holding the portion of the sleeve in place within  
3 the receptacle.
- 1 24. The spacer of claim 23 wherein the receptacle is substantially U-shape.
- 1 25. The spacer of claim 12 comprising an elongated shaft extending between a sleeve bridge  
2 formed by the sleeve engaging member and the sling and including a channel for traversal by the  
3 portion of the sleeve.
- 1 26. The spacer of claim 25 wherein the sleeve engaging member is substantially U-shaped for  
2 forming the sleeve bridge.
- 1 27. The spacer of claim 11 wherein the sling engaging member comprises a pin extending from  
2 the spacer.
- 1 28. The spacer of claim 27 comprising an elongated shaft extending between the pin and the  
2 sling engaging member and including a channel for traversal by the sleeve.
- 1 29. The spacer of claim 28 wherein the sling engaging member is substantially V-shaped.
- 1 30. A sling delivery system, comprising:
  - 2 a sling assembly comprising an elongate sling and a sleeve covering at least a portion of  
3 the elongate sling; and
  - 4 a spacer for positioning a portion of a sleeve away from a portion of a sling at least  
5 partially enclosed within the sleeve.
- 1 31. The sling delivery system of claim 30 wherein the sleeve comprises first and second ends  
2 and the spacer is positioned intermediate the first and second ends.
- 1 32. The sling delivery system of claim 30 wherein the sling comprises first and second sides, the  
2 sleeve comprises first and second sides, and the spacer is disposed between the second side of  
3 the sling the second side of the sleeve.

- 1    33. The sling delivery system of claim 32 wherein the first side of the sleeve comprises a
- 2    discontinuity.
- 1    34. The sling delivery system of claim 32 wherein the spacer creates a loop in a mid-length
- 2    portion of the second side of the sleeve.
- 1    35. The sling delivery system of claim 34 wherein the loop comprises a sleeve bridge.
- 1    36. The sling delivery system of claim 30 wherein a mid-length portion of the sling is devoid of
- 2    covering by the sleeve.
- 1    37. A sling system comprising a sling, a sleeve covering at least a portion of the sling, and a
- 2    spacer, wherein the sleeve comprises first and second sides, the first side having first and second
- 3    slit-shaped apertures intermediately located between first and second ends of the sleeve, the sling
- 4    threads out of the sleeve through the first slit-shaped aperture and back into the sleeve through
- 5    the second slit-shaped aperture creating a mid-length sleeve loop, and the spacer is positioned to
- 6    space the sling away from the mid-length sleeve loop.
- 1    38. The sling system of claim 37 wherein the spacer is a tube and wherein the sleeve loop is
- 2    partially secured within the interior of the tube.
- 1    39. The sling system of claim 37 wherein the tube is substantially flat.
- 1    40. The sling system of claim 39 wherein the substantially flat tube comprises an aperture for
- 2    sighting a cutting line through the spacer and sleeve loop to separate the sleeve into portions that
- 3    may be removed from about the sling.
- 1    41. A sling assembly comprising:
  - 2        a sling;
  - 3        a first sleeve having a first end and a second end;
  - 4        a second sleeve having a first end and a second end; and
  - 5        a tube, wherein the second end of the first sleeve and the second end of the second sleeve
  - 6        are fitted into the tube.